

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-07 RSC-01

CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06

SIL-01 AGR-20 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01

/180 W

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R 100700Z JUL 74

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1985

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ECON, PINT, EEC, GR

SUBJECT: ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY IN NORTH

1. FOR PAST SEVERAL DAYS, THESSALONIKI PRESS HAS UNDERScored GROWING PROBLEM OF FARMERS IN VERRIA-NAOUsSA-EDESSA AREA IN DISPOSING OF THIS YEAR'S CROP OF PEACHES, AN IMPORTANT PRODUCT IN WESTERN MACEDONIAN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY. AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, PROBLEM CENTERS ON LARGE SCALE EXPORTS OF ITALIAN PEACHES TO WESTERN EUROPEAN, PRINCIPALLY WEST GERMAN, MARKETS WHICH HAS DRIVEN PRICES DOWN AND INDUCED GOG TO SUSPEND EXPORTS TO EEC COUNTRIES IN EXPECTATION OF HIGHER PRICES LATER.

2. IN FRONT PAGE ARTICLE, "ELLINIKOS VORRAS" ECONOMIC EDITOR NICOLAOS STANGOS JULY 6 WROTE THAT FARMERS DUMPING CROPS IN RIVERS SINCE WAREHOUSES AND REFRIGERATION PLANTS ALREADY OVERLOADED WITH PEACHES AWAITING EXPORT, AND THAT IF NO GOG ASSISTANCE FORTHCOMING THIS YEAR'S CROP FACED "CATASTROPHE". NAOUsSA FRUIT UNION, HE REPORTED, HAD URGED GOG PERMIT

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SHIPMENTS IMMEDIATELY TO CLEAR WAREHOUSES FOR FORTHCOMING

RED HAVEN PEACH CROP, EVEN AT LOWER PRICES, AND TO PROVIDE EXPORT SUBSIDIES. UNION POINTED OUT BLOCKAGE HURTING NOT ONLY FARMERS, BUT PROCESSING EMPLOYEES WHO CURRENTLY BEING LAID OFF.

3. FOLLOWING DAY STANGOS COMMENTARY CONTINUED, QUOTING VERRIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT WHO CHARGED THERE HAD BEEN NO GOG "COORDINATION AS IN PAST" AND THAT SINCE ABOLITION OF MINISTRY OF NORTHERN GREECE "EVERYTHING HAS TO BE DECIDED BY ATHENS, WHERE PEOPLE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT FRUIT MARKETING". HE CHARGED THERE WAS NO INFORMATION DISSEMINATED ON ITALIAN EXPORTS THIS YEAR, "NO PROGRAM FOR GREEK EXPORTS", AND THAT "WRONG MEASURE" TAKEN TO STOP PEACH EXPORTS, WHILE "NO EFFORT MADE TO ORGANIZE DOMESTIC MARKET". IN SAME EDITION CHIEF EDITOR ELIAS KYROU TOOK REGIME TO TASK FOR "UNACCEPTABLE AND UNEXAMPLED" LACK OF COORDINATION ATTRIBUTABLE TO ABOLITION OF NORTHERN GREEK MINISTRY.

4. JULY 9 PRESS NOTED GOG APPROVAL OF 5000 TON PEACH SHIPMENTS TO POLAND AND EAST GERMANY WITH SUBSIDY OF 1.2 DRACHMAS PER KILO, BUT COMMENTED THIS INSUFFICIENT AND DEMANDED FREE EXPORT TO EEC COUNTRIES.

5. COMMENT: PERENNIAL PEACH EXPORT PROBLEM AGGRAVATED THIS YEAR BY BUMPER CROP ESTIMATED AT 260 TO 270 THOUSAND TONS, UP TEN PER CENT FROM 1973 AND, AS CHARGED, BY INADEQUATE GOVERNMENT PLANNING. OPEN CRITICISM OF REGIME AND INVIDIOUS COMPARISON WITH SITUATION UNDER PAPADOPOULOS WHEN GOVERNMENT KEPT CLOSE EYE ON SUBJECT, STRONGEST WE HAVE SEEN TO DATE. NORTHERN GREEK ECONOMY CURRENTLY DISTRESSED ALSO BY DRAMATIC DROP IN LOCAL TOURIST REVENUES, ESTIMATED DOWN AT LEAST 30 PERCENT FROM LAST SUMMER.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FRUIT, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT SALES, AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS, AGRICULTURAL PRICE SUPPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: martinml
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974THESSA00352
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740183-0189
From: THESSALONIKI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740759/aaaabyyz.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinml
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by martinml>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY IN NORTH
TAGS: EAGR, ECON, PINT, GR, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005